

RESEARCHES AND TRANSACTIONS
OF
THE NEW YORK STATE ARCHEOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

LEWIS H. MORGAN CHAPTER

ROCHESTER, N. Y.

GOVERNMENT AND INSTITUTIONS
OF THE IROQUOIS

BY

LEWIS HENRY MORGAN, L. L. D.

Being a paper delivered before the Rochester division of "The
New League of the Iroquois," Nov. 7, 1845, and before the New
York Historical Society, April 6, 1846.

With an introduction and editorial notes

BY

ARTHUR C. PARKER



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Vol. VII

No. 1

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"In the morning give thanks to the Great Spirit for the return of day and the light of the Sun; at night renew your thanks to him that his ruling power has preserved you from harm during the day, and also that the night has come again in which you may rest your wearied body."

Extract from a speech of J. Johnson Soshawah to the council of the Six Nations at Tonawanda, held Oct. 1, 2, 3, 1845.

"He looked toward the east and saw the smoke of a thousand distilleries rising and shutting out the light of the sun."

Gonydiyu.

"May the Great Spirit bless you all, and bestow upon you the blessings of life, health, peace and prosperity, and in turn, may you appreciate his great goodness."

This remarkable benediction of a pagan preacher should be preserved for the honor of the man as well as for its real beauty and reverential tone.



Introduction

THE address of Lewis Henry Morgan, which forms the body of this number of the New York State Archeological Association Researches and Transactions, constitutes one of Morgan's earliest papers upon the subject which he later developed with such remarkable results. The manuscript of this paper, with many others, is the property of the University of Rochester and has never previously been published. Critics will, however, note that it flavors and, indeed, supplies some of the expressions and the substance of chapters III to VI of the "League of the Iroquois," (1851).

The value of this paper rests in the fact that it is one of the factors that stimulated Morgan to deeper study and to the elaboration of the longer manuscripts which became his justly renowned "League of the Iroquois." Morgan's interest was kept alive during the late 40's by his deep sympathy with the Tonawanda Seneca people whose lands were about to be appropriated by a land company, though the Indians, themselves, had signed no paper and given no consent. The injustice of the threatened action was so flagrant that Morgan had little difficulty in arousing much interest and support throughout western New York. He did this largely by means of his "Grand Order of the Iroquois," a secret society based upon an Iroquoian ritual and bestowing Indian names upon its members. The Rochester lodge bore the name "Turtle Tribe of the Nundawaronoh," and it was before this body that the present paper was first read. It is interesting to note that Morgan and his young Seneca friend, Ely S. Parker, after many trips to Albany, New York, Philadelphia and Washington succeeded in saving a portion of the Tonawanda Indian land and preventing the expulsion of the Indian people to an undesirable western reserve.

It is possible that Lewis Henry Morgan Chapter, N. Y. S. A. A., will publish a number of the Morgan papers, many of which are rich in allusions to his reservation visits. If so, an entire volume of this series will be devoted to them, thereby constituting a posthumous work of no mean value.

ARTHUR C. PARKER.



LEWIS HENRY MORGAN

"Who then lives to mourn us? None! What marks our extermination? Nothing! We are mingled with the common elements." *Red Jacket.*

Government and Institutions of the Iroquois¹

By LEWIS HENRY MORGAN

Brothers:² The leaves of American Literature are thickening with the memorials of Indian life; and under this stimulus we are slowly arousing to the great subject of our Indian relations. Fugitive narrations of incidents are giving place to substantial history; and research is succeeding to superficial observation. With reference to the future, there is obviously a sentiment growing up with the present generation which will eventually lead us to stand beside the Indian and feel an interest in his welfare as a man. With regard to the past there is an increasing desire to uncover the rude grave into which whole races have been hurried and to gather up those events which must form the prefatory pages to our own history upon this continent. Tribe after tribe and race upon race have become extinct. The Pequod and the Narragansett are entombed. The bow of the Mohegan has been broken. The southern Atlantic tribes have melted away and finally

¹This paper bears the original title: /Address/by/Schenandoah/on the/Government and Institutions of the Iroquois/delivered before/the/Turtle Tribe of the Nundawaronoh /At the Falls of the Genesee/Before the/Monthly Council/Nov. 7, 1845. /Before the New York Historical Society April 6, 1846. /A people without a city—a government without a record./

²This salutation is in imitation of the traditional Iroquois method of beginning an address. It is doubly appropriate here since it was addressed to the Rochester Branch of "The Grand Order of the Iroquois," a secret society formed by Morgan, having a lodge known as the Turtle Tribe, as indicated in the original title of the address. A. C. P.

disappeared; while to complete this picture of dissolving races¹ we need but turn to the dismembered and diminished nations of the Iroquois Confederacy, which are gradually yielding up their political existence before our eyes, and feebly struggling to delay that dissolution which they cannot avert.

To the future scholar the exit of the Indian from our limits will be an event of indelible interest. He will look back to this age to account not only for the disposition made of him; but for the records and vestiges of his existence. In after years, we are apt to believe, the mementos of the Iroquois are destined to no ordinary share of attention². The student perchance will forsake the classic fables to study the legends of the Seneca and the Mohawk. The statesmen will turn to this Confederacy to discover that perfect and harmonious union, which was one of the chief ends to be achieved by the American Constitution. The orator may be attracted from Cicero to Red Jacket and will acknowledge that the spirit of eloquence has been summoned forth by the Seneca orator as fully as by the Roman; while the sons of poesy tracing the Indians footsteps eternally enstamped upon our rivers, hills, and lakes, shall again call back the forest and within the shelter of the oak again rear the wigwam of the forest chief.

It may be asserted that we have too lightly estimated the government and institutions of the Iroquois; although the results of this Confederacy have astonished the enquirer since their transactions and ours became blended in one series of events. We have admitted their fidelity to the Union which they established—their personal bravery—their eloquence in council—their generosity in friendship: while we

¹This sentiment regarding the disappearance of the Indians is typical of a certain group of writers in the Victorian period.

²This prediction has proven true. Morgan soon began his collection of Iroquois ethnological material and began to compile the notes that later were the basis of his "League" and other works. A.C.P.

have shuddered at the terms of their military code, and the unrelenting hatred with which they pursued our fathers in the revolutionary struggles, fearing though they did their gradual displacement from their native land. The Acquinushionee¹ or Iroquois exhibited a stronger and higher nationality of character than any other Indian race; a wider range of projects, more stability of purpose, more wisdom in legislation; and all these several characteristics in so far as they differ from those of kindred races should doubtless be attributed to a superiority of institutions and under them to a higher development of the powers and capacities of man in the hunter state.

We have, then, for the antiquities of New York, the rise, progress and decline of an Indian empire more considerable in its magnitude, more important in its events, and more remarkable in its structure than any other Indian fabric in any other subdivision of North America except that of the Aztecs. The true spirit, however, and internal organization of this Confederacy are still concealed from common observation. Their government and institutions have never been fully investigated and perhaps a complete elucidation may never be obtained from the difficulties which beset inquiry. Enough however has been gathered to present an outline in which we may discover much to admire, and much to puzzle in the legislation of our Indian predecessors.

The Iroquois in their own account of the origin of the Confederacy universally go back to a remote and uncertain period where the alliance between the Five Nations was formed, and those laws and institutions were established under which without essential change they have continued to flourish. They assert that the Nations were originally

¹Acquinushionee seems first to have been used by Schoolcraft in his "Indian Tribes," III, 517. Spelled as Morgan does above, Schoolcraft employed the word in Proc. N. Y. Hist. Soc. 80, 1844. Charlevoix in 1744 used the term, Agonnonsionni. A.C.P.

separate and hostile but related, and that the project of a Confederation was originated by Da-gar-no-we-dah an Onondaga and explained by his spokesman Hayonwanthah, a wise man of the Onondagas, and submitted for adoption to a general council of these nations convened for the purpose at Ya-jese-ta-yen-da-quah,¹ near the eastern limitations of Cayuga Lake. Their traditions further assert that the Confederacy as established by this council, with its laws, rulers, and mode of administration, has come down to them through many generations with scarcely a change, except in the addition of a class of officers called Chiefs, the lowest in authority, and an essential modification of the law in relation to marriage.

Without considering the probable accuracy of these traditions, the object of our inquiry is to investigate the structure of this government as it stood in its full vigor during the American revolution; and to deduce if possible, the general principles upon which it was founded.

The alliance between the nations was unequal in some few respects, and to obtain a correct conception of the alliance itself, and of the inequality so far as it did exist; it will be necessary firstly, to consider the number and office of the Rulers of the Confederacy as such and of the nations in their separate capacities; and secondly, the division of the people into tribes or clans.

The central government was organized and administered as a whole upon the same principles as each separate nation; and the nations stood nearly in the same relation to the Confederacy that the states of our union do to the Republic. The Iroquois government presenting five oligarchies within one oligarchy; while our union exhibits several republics within one republic.

¹Morgan does not use this name in other writings. In the "League," 61, he says "It---points to the northern shore of Ga-nun-ta-ah, or Onondaga Lake."

The ruler or ruling body as the case may be is the first object of inquiry in any government and when their powers and tenure of office are discovered we have the true index to the nature of the government itself. The Iroquois provided a numerous ruling body by establishing nine and forty permanent sachemships distributed throughout the Five Nations. All the sachems were made equal in rank, authority and dignity (except three which will be presently mentioned) and their titles to the sachemships were made hereditary under limited and peculiar laws of descent. Each sachem was "raised up" and invested with his title by means of certain ceremonies in which all the sachems participated; and, as in the titles of nobility in British peerage, he took the name of the sachemship itself as did all his successors. Of these sachemships eight belonged to the Mohawk Nation, nine to the Oneida, fourteen to the Onondaga, ten to the Cayuga and eight to the Seneca. There is something so remarkable in this specimen of Indian legislation that a table of these sachemships with their division into groups or classes indicating certain interrelations hereafter to be explained is subjoined in the Seneca language.

MOHAWK

- | | | | |
|------|----------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| I. | 1. Degaioga | 2. Hayowantha | 3. Sadegaiwadeh |
| II. | 4. Shoaewaah | 5. Deyohhehgoh | 6. Oahhehgowah |
| III. | 7. Deanohgaine | 8. Hosdawahsyonthah | |

ONEIDA

- | | | | |
|------|------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| I. | 1. Hodashehdeh | 2. Ganohgwahyohdoh | 3. Deyoahgwendeh |
| II. | 4. Shonohses | 5. Tonaogahoh | 6. Hadyahdonan-
tah |
| III. | 7. Dewadaohdayoh | 8. Ganyādāshayah | 9. Howashadaoh |

ONONDAGA

- I. 1. Thadodahoh. Bear Tribe. Highest Sachem of the Confederacy
- 2. Tonehoshah. Beaver Tribe. Hereditary Counsellor of the Thadodahoh.
- 3. Deatgahdoos.* Beaver Tribe. Hereditary Counsellor of the Thadodahoh.
- II. 4. Ganyahdajiwak. Snipe Tribe. 5. Awehgayat. L. Turtle T.
- 6. Deyartgwaseh. G. Turtle T.
- III. 7. Honowinedoh. Wolf Tribe. This sachem was the keeper of the Wampum and treaties.
- IV. 8. Gawanahsadoh. White Deer Tr. 9. Haihoh. White Deer.
- V. 10. Hoyonyani. W. Deer Tr. 11. Shedegwasah. Bear T.
- 12. Shagogaeh. W. Deer T.
- VI. 13. Hohsaahoh. G. Turtle T. 14. Skanowadih. L. Turtle.

CAYUGA

- I. 1. Degahayoh. 2. Dejihnodauehhoh 3. Gadagwashoh
- II. 4. Shoyowes 5. Hadyahsoyoneh
- III. 6. Deyooyogo 7. Jotowehgoh 8. Deyaoethoh
- IV. 9. Todaehah 10. Desgaeh

*Abraham Le Fort now holds this sachemship. (Morgan.)

SENECA

- | | | |
|------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| I. | 1. Ganyodaiyuh. Turtle T. | 2. Degaoyes. Snipe Tribe |
| II. | 3. Gahnogai. Turtle T. | 4. Shagahjowaah. Hawk T. |
| III. | 5. Sadyenawant. Bear T. | 6. Neshangenaht. Snipe T. |
| IV. | 7. Ganohgaihdawih. Snipe T. | 8. Tonihogaawah.* Wolf T. |

*John Blacksmith holds this sachemship. (Morgan.)

SOUNDS OF VOWELS

a as in Hall	ä as in Hat	e as in they	o as in Hope
u as in Man	a as in want	i as in pin	o as in Gone

EDITOR'S NOTE. In the "League of the Iroquois," (1851), Morgan more carefully lists the sachemships. He was then writing for the eye of readers, the manuscript from which the earlier list was taken being for his own eye and practised tongue. See page 64 League of the Iroquois. The above list should not be used for reference purposes, except as a means of comparing Morgan's earlier notes with his more mature records. An example of his earlier orthography is shown in § in the Mohawk list. Sadegaiwadeh would hardly be recognized as Da-gä-no-we'-dä used in the *League*, *Ancient Society*, and in *Houses and House Life*. Hayowantha also differs from his later Hä-yo-went'-ha, and so on through the list. A.C.P.

Over each nation its sachems exercised a joint authority and held an immediate supervision. They stood upon an equality in rights, as before remarked, leaving talent and wisdom to determine the measure of influence. Their own people would be the chief objects of their care and protection but their powers were not confined within the limits of the nation; they extended throughout the Confederacy. The Mohawk sachem while among the Cayugas could exact of them the same obedience¹ to his requirements that he could of his own people; and herein we discover an element of Union, or rather a tendency to merge the national governments into one strong central government which should not be overlooked. The duties of the sachems were entirely of a civil character but within their sphere of action their powers were absolute. The more important business however was transacted in national councils which were of frequent occurrence. The whole body of sachems united formed the great council of the Confederacy and held within itself the executive and legislative authority. The Thadodahoh who was regarded as the supreme sachem over the Iroquois presided in this council so far as a presiding officer was recognized in their mode of transacting business; but he had no executive powers. He was one of the forty nine original sachems and the most that can be said of him is that to his sachemship was originally attached certain special privileges, by which he was dignified above the others and became the highest sachem in the Confederacy.

To each sachem (Hoyarnagowar) was given a war chief (Haondano) whose duty it was to stand behind him on all occasions of ceremony to aid him with advice and to execute his commands. It was his duty further to train the young braves for the war path, and, when actually out, the sachem himself, if he joined the war party, as he

¹Respect but not obedience. A.C.P.

might, fell under his commands. The office of Haondano was hereditary like the Sachemship; and they were raised in the same manner as the sachems.

The office of chief (Hoyarna)¹ was elective and the reward of merit. In number there was no limit² and the proportion was usually one to about forty people. The office was unknown in the original Confederacy, but was created after the intercourse of the Iroquois commenced with the whites. Their powers were at first limited, and confined to a participation in the affairs of their own nation, but they continued to increase in influence until at the present time they have raised themselves in some particulars to an equal voice with the sachems themselves. They are raised up and invested with office by a council of their own nation and become chief after their confirmation by a general council of sachems. Among these three classes of officers were distributed the civil and military powers of the nations and of the Confederacy.

The Senecas claimed the right of furnishing two head warriors³ or generals (Hosgehehgatārgowar) whose command reached over all the forces of the Iroquois. This claim is supported by their tradition of the long house which made the Senecas the keepers of the western door; and assigned to them the duty of repelling all attacks upon the house for the reason that their place was at the door, and they could first take the war path. If they were unable to drive back the invader they called upon the next five (the Cayugas) for aid; and if necessary

¹EDITOR'S NOTES. Morgan in the "League" uses the name Hä-seh-no-wā-neh, the correct term.

²In the "League" Morgan says the Senecas "have about 70 chiefs" exclusive of the eight sachems.

³The "League" gives the names as Ta-wan'-ne-ars and So-no'-so-wā. Tradition relates that this was because the Seneca people were in two groups, each of which was a bit jealous of the other. A.C.P.

upon the third five (the Onondagas) and so on until the whole Confederacy was in arms. These two military leaders on such occasions led forth all the warriors who obeyed the call and conducted the warfare to its close. The evidence however is not sufficient to warrant the belief that the Confederacy recognized two supreme military commanders; or that it had one military chieftan, the Tekarihogen, as claimed by the Mohawks. The better opinion is that the highest command both in the Nation and the Confederacy was left open to the individual whose powers and martial abilities raised him by common consent to the post, on this point.

The division into tribes¹ or clans will furnish the foundation idea of the Confederacy and the chief means of its preservation. There were eight² in each nation; and their several names furnished to each tribe its totem or tribal device. These names Wolf, Bear, Beaver, Turtle or Tortoise, White Deer, Snipe or Plover, Heron and Swift Hawk, had doubtless some emblematical signification of which we are not aware. That the original number of tribes was less we have good reason to believe; and if we may trust their traditions there were but two, the bear and the deer. Anterior to the existence of these two tribes tradition itself is silent. At the formation of the Confederacy however, seven of these tribes were recognized as it will be seen on comparing the Onandaga and Seneca sachemships that seven of the eight had sachemships running in them. There is some difficulty in understanding the distribution of these tribes throughout the several nations; and comprehending all the results which followed. We must

¹In his "Ancient Society" Morgan employs the term *gentes* instead of tribe.

²Morgan later discovered that though the Seneca people had eight clans or *gentes* that not every one of the other nations did. The Mohawk and Oneida people had but three, the Turtle, Bear and Wolf. Morgan in his published works gives fairly correct tables comparing the names of the clans among the different "nations" of the Iroquois. A.C.P.

look to the relations between the tribes for the real secret of the union and the source of its harmony and stability. In effect the Wolf tribe was divided into five parts and one fifth of it placed in each of the Five Nations. The Turtle and all the other tribes were divided in the same manner and one fifth of each allotted as it were to each nation; thus giving to each nation the eight tribes;¹ and making in their states of separation forty tribes in the Confederacy. Between those of the same name, or in other words between the separated parts of each tribe, there existed a tie of brotherhood which linked the nations together with indissoluble bonds. The Mohawk of the Beaver² Tribe found and recognized in the Seneca of the Beaver Tribe a brother bound to him at once by the ties of consanguinity and clanship. The Oneida of the Turtle Tribe hailed the Onondaga or Cayuga of the same tribe as a brother and was bound to render them hospitality and fraternal welcome. This cross relationship between the separated tribes of the same name and which was stronger if possible than the bond of brotherhood between the different tribes of the same nation, is still preserved in its original strength and is doubtless a chief reason of the tenacity with which the fragments of the old Confederacy still cling together. If either of the Five Nations had wished to cast off the alliance it must also have broken the chain of brotherhood. If the nations had fallen into collision they would have turned Hawk Tribe against Hawk Tribe, Beaver against Beaver,—in a word, brother against brother. The history of the Acquinushionee³ exhibits the wisdom of these organic provisions; for they never fell into anarchy, or approximated even to a dissolution of the Confederacy from internal disorders.

¹The League does not follow this error. Later investigation led Morgan to record the correct number in each nation.

²The Mohawk nation did not have the Beaver clan.

³Morgan in his published works employs the word Ho-de'-no-sau-nee. A.C.P.

We may here observe that the Tuscaroras who were admitted into the Confederacy¹ in 1715 on their expulsion from Carolina were never placed upon an equal footing with the other nations. They were never allowed to have a sachem who could sit as an equal in the Council of Sachems, as the original sachemships were never increased. But for all purposes of national government they were organized in all respects both with regard to the division into tribes and the ruling body, as the five originals. They also enjoyed a nominal equality in general council by the counting of the other five; and their sachems and war chiefs were raised up with the same ceremonies.

Out of the division into tribes or clans grew a vast number of complicated relations. Their endless ceremonies,—their laws of inheritance and descent,—of marriage and hospitality, received all their peculiarities from the prevailing principle of clanship. Originally with reference to marriage the Wolf, Bear, Beaver and Turtle Tribes were regarded as brothers to each other and cousins to the remaining four.² They were not allowed to intermarry. The remaining four were also brothers to each other and cousins to the four first and were also prohibited from intermarrying; but either of the four first could intermarry with either of the four last. At present the prohibition reaches no farther than the tribe of the individual although the innovation is modern. They can now marry into any tribe but their own. The children follow the tribe of the mother and hence the father and his children are always of different tribes. Their laws of descent are as peculiar as original. All titles and rights are transmitted in the female line, and hence could never pass out of the tribe. This singular mode of inheritance seems to have been designed not only to protect tribal

¹More probably 1722, though the Tuscaroras began to come at this date, (1715).

²Morgan later classifies the two divisions of the clans as phratries.

A.C.P.

rites; but also to secure the certainty if not the purity of descent inasmuch as the child must necessarily be of the mother's blood although he might not be of the blood of the mother's husband. To illustrate the practical operation of these laws the following case may be taken. Blacksmith is one of the eight present sachems of the Seneca nation and his Indian name To-ni-ho-ga-ah-wah¹ is of course one of the eight. The sachemship which he holds runs in the Wolf Tribe to which he of necessity belongs, and hence neither of his sons who are of the tribe of their mother can ever succeed him; but his brothers or sisters' son who must be of the same tribe with himself would inherit from him the sachemship. This is the principle in operation and when carried out in a variety of cases makes a singular table of descents.

It may be well to notice as a part of this system that the Indian never has but one name; and no two ever bear the same at the same time. Soon after the birth of an infant the relatives assemble and choose a name. At the first council of the nation subsequent, the birth and name are publicly announced together with the name and tribe of the father and the name and tribe of the mother. When any one is elected a chief or raised up as a sachem or Hoandano his former name is laid aside and a new one taken. The names of the tribes even in the same nation are so strongly marked by a tribal peculiarity that the tribe of the individual can generally be determined from his name alone. It may also be affirmed that the last thing which the Indian would forget would be the name of his tribe. The tribal relation is to him indissolubly valuable for he is related in some way to every individual.

With this preliminary view of the two most remarkable features of the Confederacy,—the sachemships and the tribes,—we are prepared to return to the alliance which subsisted between them as independent

¹Morgan in the League spells this name Do-ne-ho-gä-weh.

nations and make a closer inspection into the organization of this Indian oligarchy.

To the Mohawks (Garneagaonoh)¹ has been universally conceded a superiority of rank and authority over the other nations. There are reasons for believing that this relative eminence did in fact exist; but it was more a matter of difference to superior services, than any inequality of rights. If an inquiry were instituted between the clans of the Mohawks and Onondagas it is even probable that to the latter would be assigned the more eminent position. To those of hereditary right belonged the highest sachemship and the greatest number,—the keeping of the sacred wampum and of the Council Brand. When the nations however are enumerated the Mohawks are placed first. In the councils of the Confederacy they were styled Diogeh as a term of respect. It signifies neutral and has reference to their position with regard to eastern tribes. They were also receivers of tribute from all subjugated nations. The Onondagas (Onondargaonoh)² were placed next in the order of precedence. They were addressed in council by the appellation Hodesannohgeteh³ signifying name Bearer for the reason that at the establishment of the Confederacy the Thadodahoh⁴ who is represented as at that time a potent ruler, authorized them to raise up the first sachems and to give names to those sachemships which were destined to be perpetual. Next in order stand the Senecas (Nundawaronoh)⁵ who were likewise styled in council Honannehoont,⁶ literally a Door Keeper, as to them was given the charge of guarding

¹In the League this is Gä-ne-ä'-ga-o-no.

²In the "League" this name is O-nun'-dä-ga-o-no.

³In the "League", Ho-de'-san-no-ge-tä.

⁴To-do-da'-ho, in the "League."

⁵Nun-da'-wa-o-no', in the "League."

⁶Ho-nan-ne-ho'-ont, in the "League." A.C.P.

the western door of the House to which in their figurative habit they likened the fabric which they had constructed. The Oneidas (Oneh-yotecar)¹ had no original corresponding epithet. At a subsequent period they received the title Neardeondargowar² or Great Tree. It grew out of the circumstance that one of their first treaties with the whites was held beneath the shelter of a peculiar tree. The Cayugas (Gueuywehonoh)³ were styled in council Sonushogwartowar⁴ or Great Pipe from the incident that the leading sachem of the Cayugas smoked a pipe of unusual dimensions and workmanship at the Council which resulted in the establishment of the Confederacy. The Tuscaroras (Dusgaouch)⁵ were always placed last in the numeration and never had any national epithet.

All the business of the Confederacy was transacted in general Councils of the sachems which were called by either nation under established regulations as occasion might render necessary. If the envoy of a foreign power desired a Council and applied to the Oneida Nation for that purpose it became the duty of the Oneidas, if the object was sufficiently important, to summon the council and appoint the time and place. The councils were usually held around the central council fire at Onondaga. In the first instance it seems to have been necessary to send runners to the Thadodahoh to obtain his consent; but this was a mere matter of form as he had no power to prohibit a general council. When the several nations were notified the sachems followed the war chief attended by their people in great numbers repaired to the council and when the fire was kindled. The following

¹O-na'-yote-kä-o-no', in the "League."

²Na-ar-de-on-dar-go-war in the "League."

³Gwe-u'-gweh-o-no', in the "League."

⁴So-nus-ho-gwa-to-war, in the "League."

⁵Dus-ga-o-weh-o-no, in the "League." A.C.P.

is understood to have been the general routine of business. The foreign envoy was called upon by the Thadodahoh to state the business for which he had desired the Council fire to be kindled. The proposition he had to make was then heard at length with such reasons as he had to present in its support. When the question had been formally submitted for rejection or adoption the sachems with whom alone rested the power of deciding held a council by themselves to consider the proposition; and that all might be of one mind either to reject or adopt. Unanimity as in the Polish Diet was a fundamental law. The idea of voting or of majorities and minorities was unknown to our Indian predecessors. They have no word in their language meaning majority. It will be perceived by referring to the talk of Sachems that they were divided into groups of two and three. One object of this classification was to facilitate the progress to unanimity and to prevent altercation in council. No sachem could express an opinion without previously agreeing with the sachems of his group as to what that opinion should be. There is also good reason to believe that this principle was carried still further and that after each group or class had agreed within itself those appointed to express their several opinions held a conference and then appointed one of their number as spokesman in the well known Indian custom to express their resulting opinion which was the national answer. If this be true the consequence is that they voted by nations, rather than by classes. One of the two modes is certain; for the sachems as seen above were not allowed to express an opinion upon their own responsibility. When the final answers or opinions of the nations were taken if it was found that one nation or that one sachem was opposed to this proposition it terminated the business at once. Debates may have and doubtless did take place but if the overture was not unanimously agreed to it was rejected. To the envoy the decision of the Council was then communicated by a speaker appointed for the purpose. No further negotiation was necessary. The Council fire was "raked up."

The leading object of the general council was to raise up sachems and Haondanos to fill the places of those who had deceased. Whether each nation had power to enter into and prosecute a war upon its own suggestion is a difficult question. The war against the Eries¹ was the French War, they aver, was resolved upon by the Confederacy in general council. When the American Revolution² commenced they could not agree as a Confederacy to engage against our Confederacy but it was determined in Council that each nation might engage in the contest upon its own responsibility.³ The Councils of the Iroquois were conducted with dignity and with many ceremonies of which they were extremely fond. At those especially which were convened for raising up sachems to supply such vacancies as had been occasioned by death or deposition those ceremonies and national games were performed to which they were so strongly addicted. On these occasions Indian life was exhibited in full. Distance from the place presented no impediment. From the junction of the Mohawk and Hudson to the Falls of the Genesee, old men and young,—and women, with the infants lashed to the Gahonseh⁴ took the trail, and with almost incredible endurance and rapidity performed the journey to the place of Council. From the singular character of these ceremonies we may obtain an insight into their social and political condition and hence they are

¹The Eries were defeated in 1654. Morgan cites here an interesting point of history, which is that the devastating wars of the Confederacy in the mid-17th century was the French war. The facts seem to show that it was a Huron-Iroquois war in which the Huron tribes had the French as their allies. A.C.P.

²The Iroquois commonly state that it was the American Revolution and the pro-British attitude of the Mohawk people, under the domination of Brant, that disrupted the ancient League.

³This illustrates the unanimity principle for it is well known that but a portion of the Oneidas (Onandagas and Tuscaroras) did engage; but this minority presented the assumption of hostilities of the Confederacy as such. (Morgan.)

⁴The baby-carrier or cradle board.

worthy of more than a passing notice. If, for example, the Senecas had lost one or more sachem or Haondanos they would determine in national Council the time and place for holding a general council to raise up successors; and having done this would send out runners to the Onondagas to announce the kindling of the fire so many days thereafter. Strings of wampum were delivered as the record of the message the purport of which was that the *names* of the deceased called for a council. The Onondagas then sent out runners to the Mohawks they to the Oneidas; and the Oneidas to the Cayugas and the Tuscaroras. Before the appointed day, the relatives of the deceased ruler of the same tribe assembled in family council to declare officially who was entitled by inheritance to the vacant sachemship or Hoandanoship as the case might be. The sons of the last incumbent were without the line of succession because of a different tribe and the son of the sachem's sister would be the nearest heir. When there were a number of claimants standing in equal degrees, the relatives had power to choose between them as they had no law of primogeniture. This custom resulted in placing the power of nomination in the hands of the females and enabled them to pass over the nearest heir if unworthy or incompetent and select the next in succession. They could also exclude all relatives and elect from the tribe at large.¹ Whoever was finally chosen after having been accepted by the tribe was raised up and invested with office by the Council of sachems, Pater-Familias. The tribal council also had power to depose a negligent and unworthy sachem or war chief and nominate the next in succession to fill his place who was in like manner raised up to fill the vacancy thus made.

¹This is only seemingly so. The man selected was a member of one of the hoyaneh or noble families, if any such were available. Otherwise, the clan needing the chief or sachem "borrowed" a candidate from another clan and "flung a necklace about his neck," meaning that it bestowed a title which could be snatched back at any time. Certain families, however, seem to have been ineligible for reasons of heredity. Morgan, himself, cites that Red Jacket, Brant and Cornplanter were not sachems. A.C.P.

Infancy did not jeopardize the rights of the heir and if he was chosen as the one entitled to inherit he was raised up; but a guardian was appointed to discharge his duties until he reached a suitable age.

On the day of the council the ceremony of reception opened the proceedings; as until that time the several nations remained encamped at a distance from the Council House merely sending on runners to announce their arrival. The reception was rude but formal and ceremonious. After it was completed the people seated themselves in two divisions. The Mohawks, Onondagas and Senecas, who were brother nations to each other but fathers to the other three seated themselves upon one side of the council fire. The Oneidas, Cayugas and Tuscaroras who were also brother nations to each other but sons to the three first seated themselves upon the opposite side of the fire. The deceased sachem if he belonged to the first division was lamented as a father of the second, and one of the three nations performed the ceremony of lamentation for his death and of raising up a successor (to fill the sachemship which he had left vacant). If on the other hand the deceased belonged to the second division he was lamented as a Son of the first and an individual of one of the three first nations performed the lament in like manner and the ceremony of raising up his successor.

One part of the exercises consisted in the repetition of the laws and regulations of the Confederacy for the instruction of the newly inducted sachems and Haondanos. In the midst of each division (and upon rude seats) the chief personages of each were grouped together. Between them an open space was cleared, and the wise man who officiated, walked to and fro between the two opposite benches of sachems separ-

ating portions of traditionary instruction, which had been handed down from the foundation of the Confederacy.¹

Up to this stage of the council nothing of the gay or mirthful would be visible either among the old or young. All the people were in lamentation for the deceased; but when their places were filled, the reasons for mourning disappeared and with them the outward signs. The religious and martial dances, and national games ensued together with the feast; and in this way many days of rejoicing and jubilee were frequently passed.

We have thus brought under review the division of the Acqui-nushionee into tribes or clans, which being organic was doubtless prior in point of time to the Confederacy there having been at its establishment merely an assimilation of the nations in this respect.² We have also considered the powers, duties and tenure of office of the sachems, Haondanos and chiefs—their jurisdiction and administration over the nations as separate organizations—and their rule over the united nations as a Confederacy. We have also attempted to give an outline of the ceremony of raising up sachems, that we might have a glance at this Indian government in actual operation.

From these sources we may derive some general views of the nature of the Confederacy as constructed and governed—of the nations as

¹NOTE: Capt. Frost of the Onondaga Nation was *honored* to perform this ceremony at the Council which was held at Tonnanda Oct. 12th and 13th, 1845, to raise up sachems. Among other things he said that Daganowedah predicted that an animal with white eyes would come from the east and underground to destroy them but they must plant a tree with four roots one to the north, south, east and west, and all sachems must lie under this tree in perfect harmony and union to escape the threatened dangers. If they were discontented they could be subdued. (Morgan.)

²Morgan with keen observation, notes that many of the customs of the confederated Iroquois date back to their earlier condition. Many of the customs, undoubtedly, were pan-Huron-Iroquoian. The clan system, the institution of "sachems" or civil chiefs is another. Even the idea of a confederacy is likely an old one tried out before among the original groups. A.C.P.

independent governments—and of the adaptation of the whole fabric to produce its historical results. It is something to know that the Iroquois has a fully organized and systematic government and that the nations were not merely banded together by an uncertain alliance. It would be more difficult however to reanimate the structure and appreciate its spirit and influence upon the people.

The Grecian oligarchies do not furnish an exact type of the oligarchy of the Iroquois, which has some peculiarities tending to fix it as an anomalous species. If however we take the etymology of the word the "rule of the few" for our definition and reject the Grecian acceptance of the term we shall have no difficulty in understanding its character. The Greeks seem to have touched every point in man and nature. They commenced in governments with the monarchial as described in the *Iliad* and which endured from the earliest period to near the close of the heroic ages. At this time the Eupatrids or nobles becoming sufficiently powerful, divested the kings of their authority and set up aristocracies. Next the aristocracies were invaded by an uprising from the people and individuals were promoted from the *Demos* or commonalty to a place among the ruling body. In fact, when the struggles between the nobles and the people succeeded in infusing more of the democratic element into the aristocracy the oligarchy might be said to have begun. This form was the last resting place (in the onward tendency) of the Grecian institutions before this progressive principle finally developed itself—universal democracy. The Grecian political writers recognized but three varieties of government, the monarchial, the aristocratical and the democratical. If the first was completed it became a tyranny; if the second degenerated it became an oligarchy; if the last became turbulent it was styled an ochlocracy. Modern political writers also acknowledge three varieties as laid down by Montesquieu,—the republican, the monarchial and the despotic. The two last Grecian forms putting under the republican

form of modern times; which the monarchical government of Montesquieu "the rule of a king by fixed laws" was entirely unknown to the ancient Greeks.

We may therefore judge of the government of the Iroquois by the position it occupies between the two extremes of monarchy on the one hand and democracy on the other. In this view we may perceive at once that it approached a democracy as near as the government of any people could who lived in the hunter state—who had neither towns or cities nor indeed any permanent abode; who knew nothing of the use of wealth or of the industrial arts;—who desired nothing but the spoils and pleasures of the chase and the perfect individual independence of Indian life. There was however a strong infusion of the true spirit of democracy into their institutions. If the power of the sachem was absolute still the relatives had power to depose. Family distinctions were mostly unknown and the son of the most renowned chieftan stood upon a level with his fellow tribesman. There was so little isolation of the rulers that the observer could not distinguish the sachem from the warrior. Individual achievements were the source of reputation and distinction. In such a state of society there would be no want of a public sentiment on important questions which would make itself felt. That sentiment which springs up from the mass of the people and when respected furnishes a certain indication of liberal institutions and popular sovereignty. From the falls of the Mohawk to Niagara these sachems were seated with their people, little sovereignties by themselves but yet constituent members of that powerful Confederacy whose seat of government was the valley of Onondaga; and whose conquests reached from Lake Horicon to the Mississippi and from Ontario and Erie to the country of the Cherokee.

To do justice to the wisdom of those forest statesmen by whom this fabric was reared, we must remember that it was designed to

shelter them against surrounding nations like themselves living in the hunter state. It was designed to prevent that continued subdivision into independent tribes by which all accumulation of strength was prevented; and thus acquire an increase of numbers which would ensure a wide spread dominion. When therefore experience had taught the enfeebling effect of repeated subdivision the counter principle of federation would be naturally suggested. The first result would be the union of two or more sachems for mutual protection; and as the tribes would be mingled together in one nation the power of the sachems would cease to be several and become joint; and the government thus set up would be an oligarchy or the rule of the few. When several nations by a still higher process of legislation were united and cemented together in one Confederacy we should then have the exact government of the Iroquois—the *imperium in imperio*—the nations within a nation which has hitherto presented to us such a singular exterior as to render an exposition of the institutions of the Iroquois extremely difficult.

There are many internal evidences of the stability of this government to be derived from the mode of its construction. The chief element of strength in an oligarchy are the unchangeable numbers of its rulers and the equal distribution of power among them. To this safeguard the Iroquois adhered so firmly that not even upon the admission of the Tuscaroras would they increase the original number of sachemships. Another evidence of this stability may be found in the career of Red Jacket, Sagoyewatha, the most ambitious and intellectual Indian ever raised among the Iroquois or upon the continent of North America. With all the influence which he exercised over the people by the power of his eloquence he was never able to elevate himself to a higher office than that of chief; and to reach even this he was obliged to arouse the superstitious fears of the Senecas. Nearly the same remark is applicable to the celebrated Joseph Brant,

Thayendaregea, whose abilities as a military leader secured him the command of the Mohawk warriors during the perilous adventures of the revolution; but whose office as affirmed by the Cayugas, Onondagas, Tuscaroras and Senecas at this present time was merely that of chief the lowest in the Confederacy. These facts sufficiently prove that the title of sachem¹ was surrounded by impassible barriers against those who were without the family of the sachem himself and the tribe in which the title ran.

> In connection with this branch of the subject we may offer a conjecture in relation to the introduction into the government of the class denominated chiefs, which office was not created at the establishment of the Confederacy. It is probable that the power of the sachems was attacked by an uprising of the restless and ambitious; and that the sachems were compelled to raise up this subordinate class with limited powers to arrest the popular movement. We may examine the progress of human governments from monarchy its first form to free institutions its last and noblest and we shall encounter abundant illustrations of the truth of this position. When the aristocracies of Greece were assailed from below they were compelled to elevate those individuals whose growing influence threatened their authority, to an equality with themselves. If this final precaution was not taken and the popular movement was not otherwise arrested the struggle resulted in a democracy. The sachems of the Iroquois by providing an intermediate place between themselves and the peoples for the talented and ambitious made their own authority the more permanent. It is a singular fact that scarcely one of their hereditary sachems is known in our history. All of the celebrated orators and military leaders of the

¹The term "sachem" was not employed by the Iroquois in common parlance, though they sometimes use it now, just as they use the English word Chief. The word sachem is Algonkian in origin. The original Iroquoian word Hoyana, or in Mohawk, Royaneh, conveys the meaning of lord or ruler. Hale translated it "ruler." A.C.P.

Iroquois as Red Jacket, Garrangula, Schenandoah, Thayendanegea, Cannehoot, Fish-Carrier, Farmers Brother, Steeltrap, (Kanistagia) and Cornplanter were merely chiefs and received the title by election. Logan was a Cayuga sachem.

When the names of the sachemships and war chiefships are obtained in the six languages or dialects of the Iroquois we shall then perhaps be entitled on comparison; and by the further aid of signatures to treaties, to identify some of these characters as regular sachems.

We have thus finished our view of the government of the "United People" in its several parts and here for the present we have the subject. We omit all observations upon its general character as a system of government under which our Indian predecessors—the children of the forest—found shelter in the hour of attack, resources for conquest in the hour of ambitious projects and happiness and contentment in the days of peace; merely adding that in adaptation to their mode of life, their habits and wants; no scheme of government could have been devised by the genius of man better calculated for their security against outward assault, their triumph upon the war-path and their internal tranquility and harmony.

We will however observe that the government of the Confederacy existed in the Council of sachems; and when they were not assembled around the general council fire it had no visible existence. It was founded upon the "family relations"—upon the attachment of the people as secured through their ties of brotherhood. The national rule of the sachems however *was felt*; it being sensible and immediate; still the relation was nearer that of parent and child than of chief and vassal. Under this simple yet beautiful fabric of Indian construction arose the power of the Iroquois reaching in its day of rigor over a large portion of our republic;—a terror to the Narragansett in the east and the Illinois on the west—to the Adirondack in the north and the

Algonquin on the south. But the advent of the Saxon race arrested their career. The destroyer came from a foreign and unknown land. The long house of the Iroquois has fallen; but not from the enemy against whom it was erected. Even now, over the existence of the Acquinushionee, the shades of evening are gathering and unless the "new Confederacy"¹ shall interpose its future aid, we fear they will soon be lost in that night of impenetrable darkness which knows no rising sun,—that night, which has already enshrouded so many races; and from which the Red man appears to have no escape. The residue of the Iroquois will soon depart from their native seats, leaving us to remember them as the people whose sachems had no cities—whose religion had no temple—whose government had no record.

¹The society which Morgan founded and to which he addressed this paper.

THE NEW YORK STATE ARCHEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Lewis H. Morgan Chapter

The object of this Chapter shall be to promote historical study and intelligent research covering the artifacts, rites, customs, beliefs and other phases of the lives of the aboriginal occupants of New York State up to and including contact with the whites; to preserve the mounds, ruins and other evidences of these people, and to co-operate with the State Association in effecting a wider knowledge of New York State Archeology, and to help secure legislation for needed ends. Also to maintain sympathetic appreciation of the history of the American Indians, particularly of those now resident in New York State, to the end that all of their ancient wrongs and grievances may be righted agreeably to their just desires both as to property and citizenship.

Also to publish papers covering the results of field work of members or other matters within the purview of the Chapter.

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The Association is approved by the State Education Department, University of the State of New York and is working under a provisional charter.

Address all correspondence to Alvin H. Dewey, Box 185, Rochester, N. Y., or Walter H. Cassebeer, 84 Exchange St., Rochester, N. Y., or Arthur C. Parker, Director Municipal Museum, Rochester, N. Y.